

LITTLE DOVES LIMITED

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (INCORPORATING THE DIRECTORS REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2023 (Continued)

Structure, governance and management

Background

Little Doves Childcare Centre began its life in the 1970's as a Social Services run group. In 1991 Social Services handed the management of the group to a committee of parents and grandparents of children who attended that year. Under the guidance and support of NIPPA - The Early Years Organisation, and the Local Health & Social Services Trust, the committee spearheaded the group for the next number of years.

In 1997, the group received funding from the European Peace I programme which enabled further development and enhancement of the service. The group adopted the 'Peace Logo' and changed its name to Little Doves.

In 2003 the group secured funding from the Big Lottery Fund, which was used to build purpose specific premises at the rear of the West Winds Community Centre. The building was designed for the group's unique needs.

In the same year the group became a Company Limited by Guarantee, headed by a competent board of professional and business people with many years experience in the voluntary/ community sector.

Legal Structure

Little Doves is a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital. Members guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of winding up. The company is governed by its Articles of Association. The company was awarded charitable status by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 15 January 2015 (charity number 101445)

Risk Management

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the company is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the company and are satisfied that systems and procedures are in place to mitigate our exposure to the major risks.

Objectives and activities

Charitable Objects

The object of the charity is to enhance the development and education of children under statutory school age by encouraging parents/guardians to understand and provide for the needs of their children. The charity aims to: -

- offer appropriate play activities with the right parents/carers to take responsibility for and to become involved in the activities of Little Doves ensuring that Little Doves offers opportunities for all children regardless of religion, culture, race or means
- encourage the study of the needs of such children and their families and promoting public interest in and recognition of such needs of such children and their families in local areas
- support the values and principles of DENI

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Strategic report

The following sections for achievements and performance and financial review form the strategic report of the charity.

Achievements and performance

Review of activities

Through 2022/23 the charity continued to provide quality childcare for children and their families and continued to pursue our mission statement which denotes the ethos "Little Doves - Supporting Your Community, Supporting Your Family, Supporting You".

The charity continues to work closely with the community through the management committee of the West Winds Development Association, the interagency group which meets quarterly to look at the needs of the area. The group has very strong links with the local Parents & Toddler groups, the local primary school, Sure Start, The Link and Ards Arena. We are also members of the Curriculum and Programme Support organisations (CAPS). Little Doves Childcare Centre aims to enhance access to education by children in their preschool year by meeting the needs of every individual child. The centre aims to improve the early identification and assessment of special education needs, which will then be followed by appropriate intervention. In conjunction with the West Winds Primary School Nursery Unit, Sure Start and Scrabo Parents and Toddler Group, we continue to be an integral part of "The West Winds Education Community Forum" and education and support service available to the whole community.

As part of the Preschool Capacity Building Project, our staff continually improved their skills in identifying and meeting the educational and well-being needs of the children. All of our staff have attended intense training. Staff have also had the opportunity to work with other professionals who were involved with the children and their families including the Education Authority - Early Years Inclusion Service, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, educational and clinical psychologists and the Social Services team.

Day to day activities and special events

Throughout the year the staff carefully planned and evaluated the preschool activities. Staff ensured each child was given full use of both the indoor and outdoor facilities. In partnership with parents we planned various information sessions for parents addressing topics such as; learning in the Early Years, behaviour management, health and well-being. Parents, grandparents and carers participated in a fundraising event for Children in Need.

Visitors

Visitors to pre-school included music and movement activities from Music Bugs and Little Critters. We also kept in contact with our local elderly residents.

Networking

As part of our ongoing networking links, the group welcomed Primary 1 teachers from the Model Primary School, West Winds Primary School, Castle Gardens Primary School, Loughries Primary School and Victoria Primary School to meet parents and children. We continued to network with other pre-school members in the North Down and Ards area as part of our ongoing CAPS training.

LITTLE DOVES LIMITED

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (INCORPORATING THE DIRECTORS REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2023 (Continued)

Achievements and performance (continued)

Quality Inspections

The staff continued to work extremely hard to keep up the high standards achieved in previous years.

Staff dedication and training

We are very fortunate to have a team of dedicated and caring staff and volunteers who work with the children and their families. The team is committed to maintaining their high level of expertise in childcare and education and continues training to the highest standards. All staff participated in cluster training, Child Protection Training, First Aid training and qualifications.

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Little Doves and Silver Swans

We also remotley continued our community based project "Little Doves and Silver Swans". This involves our children visiting the local supported living facility, Cuan Court, to take part in activities to develop intergenerational bonds and socialise with local elderly and those who suffer from dementia. Our children and the residents have thrived during this continued initiative and we will continue to build on its success in the future.

Financial review

The financial results for the year are shown on pages 6 to 8.
Total unrestricted income for the year was £33,994 and the corresponding expenditure was £44,988 producing a deficit of £10,995 in unrestricted activities. Total restricted income for year was £24,200 and expenditure was £24,200 utilising all the restricted income.

The trustees' annual report and strategic report was approved on 15th September 2023 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by: -



Mr N McRobbie
Trustee



Mr J Nightingale
Trustee